

WEST MARION Messenger

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES & BUSINESSES BETWEEN SR 200 AND US 27

'Til the cows come home



PHOTOS BY JIM CLARK

A "cattle drive" through downtown Ocala ended at Tusawilla Park for a Rotary Club fundraiser on Saturday. Hundreds gathered along the route to see the unusual traffic in the city.



Above, left, it was full speed ahead on Southeast First Avenue for these two, while above, right, the entire group followed the patriotic truck. Below, part of the crowd at the square waiting for the cattle.



West Port student killed in crash

A 16-year-old West Port High School student was killed Feb. 14 in an accident on County Road 484 near Marion Oaks.

Brandon A. Garner, who played freshman football last season, was driving a 2002 Chevrolet S-10 pickup truck eastbound in the right lane, approaching traffic ahead of him allegedly at a high rate of speed, according to a report from the Florida Highway Patrol.

As he was passing, in the right lane, a 2010 Hyundai Elentra driven by Antonia M. Santiago, 59, of Ocala, he accidentally struck the right side of the Hyundai, overcorrected to the right and lost control. The pickup struck a road sign and then a large tree on the south shoulder of the road, then rotated back into the road.

Santiago, meantime, was able to maintain control and came to a stop.

According to the FHP, it was raining at the time of the crash and the road was wet.

Garner was pronounced dead at the scene at 4:25 p.m.

Help Special Olympics

Hundreds of local student athletes gather later this month at Forest High School for Marion County's 41st annual Special Olympics Summer Games.

But upwards of 500 high school and community volunteers are needed to provide the manpower to make these games possible.

Opening day is set for 10:45 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, with Summer Games continuing Thursday and Wednesday, Feb. 21 and 27, from 9:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. As many as 450 school-based athletes will compete at Forest High School's football stadium. 5000 S.E. Maricamp Road near Ocala.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Lynn Brantley, Special Olympics Coordinator, at 352-671-1434 or email her at Lynn.Brantley@marion.k12.fl.us.

Sheriff describes plans, accomplishments

BY JIM CLARK
Editor



PHOTO BY JIM CLARK

Sheriff Chris Blair speaks at a recent meeting.

Making his first appearance before the State Road 200 Coalition since a campaign stop last year, Sheriff Chris Blair gave members an overview of his plans and what he has accomplished so far after taking office on Jan. 8.

Blair reiterated a campaign pledge, saying that the Sheriff's Office was "top heavy," and that his job was to lower the administrator percentage and "put more boots on the ground."

He added, "Our job is to keep you safe."

He said he was adding a warrant unit in the near future, and that those deputies would be dedicated to serving warrants. Blair said that now the road deputies might recognize someone who has a warrant out or might get notified of one, for instance, at a traffic stop, but there is no one dedicated to serving warrants.

He also spoke of starting a street crimes unit who would patrol in areas where there is high crime activity. He said it would be a five-

man unit with a sergeant.

Blair indicated that new software will help deputies see where current activity is, making it easier to supply backup and other services. "It's called direct patrol," he told the crowd.

Going along with that he said that the communications center would end what he called "blind dispatch" so that others can hear where the deputies are going.

The sheriff said he is starting a Citizens Academy to allow people

Please see SHERIFF, Page 4

Coffee, anyone? Donuts? Muffins? Juice?

"Have some coffee...a donut...a muffin? Maybe some juice?" Welcoming offers like these were heard on Saturday morning.

Feb. 9, when Nina and Ken Stiles hosted a Coffee Social at the Fairfield Village Clubhouse between 9:30 and 11 a.m.

Hoping to initiate a regular occurrence in our community, this "lively" couple brought in gallons of hot coffee, wonderfully warm donuts, truly delicious muffins, and cool, fresh juice to treat those of us in Fairfield Village who attended their "lovely" gathering. It was such a delightful treat!

When I spoke with my neighbor couple, they told me that they had thought about having a social gathering like this for quite some time. The holiday season



Fairfield Village
Priscilla Geissal

was so filled with other activities and with many people traveling to be with family that this first full week in February seemed like the best time.

The hope they expressed was that something of this nature might be held on a regular basis so that friendly members in our community could assemble and enjoy a Saturday or Sunday morning treat with our convivial neighbors.

Sitting and conversing over a warm coffee cup has always been a pleasant way to get to know someone whom we may have seen often and even waved to time and time again, but just never had the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversation.

By inviting the community to "have some coffee and donuts," Ken and Nina were providing the setting for a casual time to be the friendly neighbors that most of us in Fairfield Village want to be. By all appearances, they were quite successful.

A large group milled around or sat together at tables to enjoy the warm and welcoming repast. Who can resist the smell of coffee and donuts? Surely not! My best intentions to limit my calorie intake were put on hold as I had the

chance to share a few moments with friends I had not seen in quite some time. It was such a nice time!

Those of us who participated join with Ken and Nina in the hope that the weekend "coffee social" will become a regular part of the activities of our community. Once again, it was evident that most of our neighbors are truly warm and friendly; and that Fairfield Village does live up to its reputation as "a lively place filled with lovely people."

We send warm wishes to our friends and families in other parts of the United States hit by such cold and stormy weather. We would love to share a delightful cup of coffee and a delicious donut with you just as we did with Ken and Nina Stiles. Y'all come on down!



Nina's broad smile and Ken's playful grin show what a friendly, warm couple they are. Their hosting of the first "Coffee Social" of 2013 foreshadows many more convivial gatherings in the Fairfield Clubhouse.



Ellie Lynch, left, and Elsie Painter are two beautiful ladies all decked out in their white outfits while they enjoyed visiting at the Coffee Social. What beautiful ladies with wonderful smiles!



Two of Fairfield Village's "treasures," Cecile Gautier and Paula Le Blanc showed their lovely smiles and approval as they enjoyed their coffee with delicious muffins provided by Ken and Nina Stiles.



Larry and Dale Hansen are new members of our Fairfield community who enjoyed the Coffee Social. Dale says she is "one of a kind." We are so glad to have this enthusiastic new couple as part of our neighborhood.

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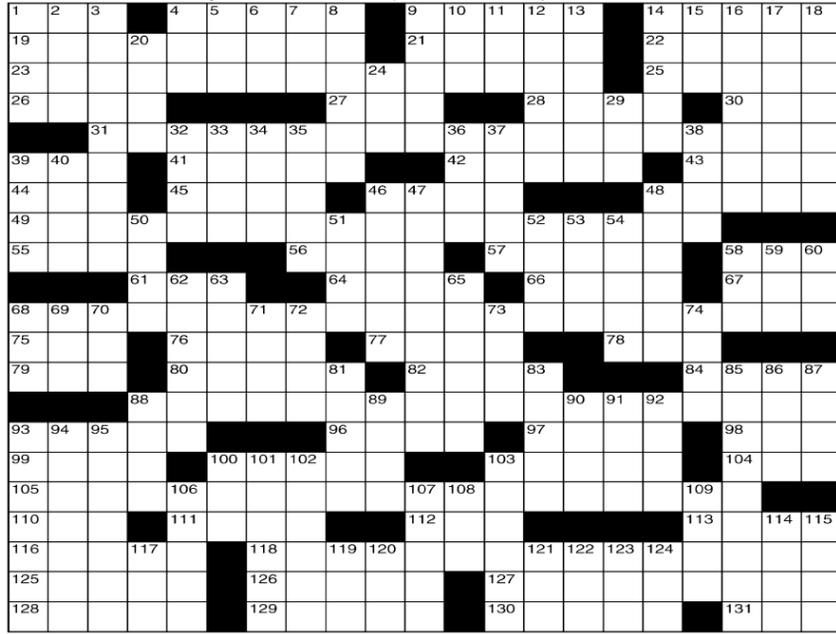
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TRIPLE ALLIANCE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Clumsy guy
 - 4 Sticky green pods
 - 9 "Billy, Don't Be —" (1974 pop hit)
 - 14 Instrument panel part
 - 19 Most disorderly
 - 21 "Max Returns" (1983 film)
 - 22 Harass
 - 23 [Arrest, Omit, Bun]
 - 25 Stimulate
 - 26 Some bills
 - 27 — for Innocent" (Sue Grafton novel)
 - 28 Corn cake
 - 30 Clickable address
 - 31 [Lofty, Sullen, Seemly]
 - 39 TV announcer
 - 41 Lawman
 - 42 Wyatt's family
 - 43 French river
 - 44 Chief
 - 45 O'Leary's tribe
 - 46 Virgo predecessor
 - 47 "... sting like —"
 - 48 "Take — song and make it better"
 - 49 [Family, Toil, Crying]
 - 50 Srs.' lobby
 - 51 Ray of
 - 52 McDonald's
 - 53 Radiohead singer Thom
 - 54 Claiborne of fashion
 - 55 River islet
 - 56 Tattooists' supplies
 - 57 Livy's 2,002
 - 58 previous to
 - 59 [Fit, Loaded, Sage]
 - 60 Wrap up
 - 61 Garment line
 - 62 Inducement
 - 63 "Well, lah-di —!"
 - 64 Marks, as a ballot box
 - 65 Civic maker
 - 66 Director
 - 67 Ephron
 - 68 "In case that's true ..."
 - 69 [Secure, Broth, Cask]
 - 70 Stand by for
 - 71 Napping pain
 - 72 Yuletide
 - 98 Ovine female
 - 99 — Gauche (Paris' Left Bank)
 - 100 Pacific island country
 - 103 Handled clumsily
 - 104 Suffix with host
 - 105 [Bing, Quiets, Ogden]
 - 106 Whack down
 - 107 Joan of rock
 - 108 Pretense
 - 109 "I goofed"
 - 110 Author
 - 111 Garnet
 - 112 Milky, Sad]
 - 113 Bravery
 - 114 Thundering
 - 115 Eight-faced solids
 - 116 Computer printer brand
 - 117 Exams for future attys.
 - 118 Original
 - 119 Filming spot
 - 120 P — (big name in hip-hop)
 - 121 Soapy froth
 - 122 Napoleon's isle of exile
 - 123 Crème-
 - 124 crême linkup
 - 125 In no particular musical key
 - 126 Bagged midday meal
 - 127 Brand of frozen fries
 - 128 Iridescent gem
 - 129 R&B singer
 - 130 India. —
 - 131 "Much — surprise ..."
 - 132 Humor writer
 - 133 Bombeck
 - 134 Three of —
 - 135 Luau wear
 - 136 Apr. 15
 - 137 payee
 - 138 26th letter
 - 139 August gripe
 - 140 Fox teen drama show
 - 141 Pet
 - 142 Baneful spell
 - 143 Ending for
 - 144 butyl
 - 145 Product plugs
 - 146 Pull hard
 - 147 Nukes and such
 - 148 Sister and wife of Zeus
 - 149 Electric fan's noise
 - 150 Maker of Asteroids
 - 151 Former U.N. head Kofi
 - 152 Estates not acquired under leases
 - 153 Fastens fabric
 - 154 Corrida shouts
 - 155 Prevaricates
 - 156 Eye: Prefix
 - 157 Columnist
 - 158 Maureen
 - 159 "It's — real!"
 - 160 Alan of "M*A*S*H"
 - 161 Information repository
 - 162 Spy's device
 - 163 Open affirmations
 - 164 TV "Science Guy"
 - 165 Bill —
 - 166 Star-related
 - 167 Gives voice to
 - 168 World War II general
 - 169 George
 - 170 Tennis' Borg
 - 171 "The Wizard of Oz" actor
 - 172 Bert and others
 - 173 — fi film
 - 174 Exotic juice brand
 - 175 Untamished
 - 176 Chair
 - 177 English lav
 - 178 — favor for
 - 179 Rebel Tyler
 - 180 Prefix with hazard
 - 181 Safari truck, for short
 - 182 No, to Scots
 - 183 UPS competitor



Happenings

Thursday, Feb. 21

Alzheimer's workshops set

Marion County families are invited to attend a series of free Alzheimer's CARE training workshops that will be offered on Feb. 21, March 7, March 21 and April 4. Each session will begin at 5:15 p.m. at Home Instead Senior Care, 606 S.W. 3rd Ave., Ocala.

Developed by Home Instead Senior Care, the Alzheimer's or Other Dementias CARE program incorporates an innovative, hands-on approach to help families deal with the difficult behavioral changes that often are associated with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias.

During the workshop, program experts will teach caregivers how to:

- Manage behaviors.
- Encourage engagement.
- Care for themselves while caring for their loved one.

To reserve a spot, call Home Instead Senior Care at 352-622-6447.

Friday, Feb. 22

Charity picnic for blind center

Highland Memorial Park is hosting a charity picnic to benefit the "Florida Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired" on Friday, Feb. 22 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Come out and support this great organization! The address for Highland Memorial Park is 1515 N.E. Third St., Ocala (two blocks behind the

Cascades). Lunch will be served on a donation basis with 100 percent of the proceeds benefiting the "Florida Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired."

February's delicious menu is smothered chicken, garlic mashed potatoes, Caesar salad, garlic rolls, brownies, iced tea and bottled water. Relax in the shade or take your lunch to go...it's up to you. For more information, call Community Care Director, Beverly Brown at 352-671-6466.

Saturday, Feb. 23

Kingdom of the Sun Concert Band

The Kingdom of the Sun Concert Band announces its "A Musical Memory" concert series for Saturday, Feb. 23 at 2 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 24 at 3 p.m. at the Marion Technical Institute, 1614 S.E. Fort King St., Ocala. Musical selections include: "Finlandia"; "Selections from Les Miserables"; "Memory" from Cats; "Indiana"; "Esprit De Corps"; "Morceau Symphonique" featuring trombonist Richard Blankenship; and "Lassus Trombone" featuring the KOS trombone section.

All performances are free and open to the public.

For more information, call 352-624-9291 or visit <http://kingdomofthesunband.org>.

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Mardi Gras at Quail Meadow

Mardi Gras came to Quail Meadow last Monday night. The decorations were fantastic, the music was right from Bourbon Street, and the food was fabulous! Those who came in costume really added to the festivities. There were 50 residents who enjoyed the lively evening.

The evening began with a drawing for the King and Queen of the Mardi Gras. Lil Carie and Steve Kane were the lucky winners. For their prize, their tables were allowed to be first in line for the food. However, to get to the food, everyone had to march around the room to the music, "When the Saints Go Marching In." This parade was led by Dan Parker (wasn't he cute with his umbrella?).

After feasting on red beans and rice, chicken, homemade bread, and too many other items to list, the contestants for the "mask" contest were introduced. The winner was Carol Sjogren with her mask of feathers. Carol's prize was a "King Cake." The most unusual masks



**Quail Meadow
Carolyn Slocumb**

were brought by Jack and Margene Sheidler. Their masks were Eskimo faces. Jack said they got them many years ago in Alaska. The masks were even signed by the artist who made them.

Everyone participated in Benny's trivia contest. The theme of the contest was Mardi Gras. Did you know that Mardi Gras actually began in Mobile, Alabama - not New Orleans? Also, did you know that Mardi Gras literally translates in English to Fat Tuesday? Carol Mowrey was the scholar with the

Please see QUAIL, Page 8



Donna Elliott (standing) and her mother, Laura Jamison.

**WEST MARION
Messenger**
SERVING THE COMMUNITIES & BUSINESSES BETWEEN SR 200 AND US 27

The West Marion Messenger is a free community newspaper covering news of communities west of Ocala including Fore Ranch, Stone Creek, Fairfield Village, Ocala Palms, Timberwood, Falls of Ocala, Quail Meadow, Foxwood Farms and Golden Hills.

Postmaster: Entered as Third Class Matter at the post office in Ocala, Fla., 34477.

Problems getting the Messenger: If your community is listed above and the Messenger is not delivered to you or you are having trouble getting the paper from boxes around the S.R. 40 and SR 27 areas, call 854-3986.

CONTACT INFORMATION
(352) 854-3986 Fax (352) 854-9277
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- Editor - Jim Clark
- Circulation - Barbara Jaggers
- Inside Sales/Office Coordinator - Michel Northsea
- Advertising Sales - Tom Rapplean and Kristy Kaigan
- Regional Manager - John Provost

Deadline for news:
Friday 1 p.m. the week before publication.

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<p>I want to get news in the Messenger. Call editor Jim Clark at 352-854-3986 or send by e-mail to editor@westmarionmessenger.com</p> <p>Community news and photos must be received by Friday the week before publication. Mail and photos may be left at the Messenger office in Kingsland Plaza. All contributions are subject to editing for clarity, taste, and style.</p>	<p>Deadline for Advertising</p> <p>Classified Reader Ads 4 pm Friday</p> <p>Display Ads 5 pm Thursday</p>
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West Marion Messenger

SHERIFF

continued from Page 1

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He plans two sessions, one at Master the Possibilities at On Top of the World and the other at the Sheriff's Office.

He drew an immediate, and expected, reaction when he mentioned panderers.

He talked about other counties that have ordinances that have been upheld, and specifically mentioned Polk County (Lakeland and Winter Haven area). He said he is working with Kathy

Bryant, County Commission chair, to pull an ordinance together that will withstand a court challenge.

He said he is bringing in retirees to look at the "whole Sheriff's Office to see what we can do to make it better."

Blair is starting a program where deputies who are military veterans will wear ribbons with that designation.

When the subject of gun control came up, he commented, "I took an oath to support and defend the Constitution. I own a lot of guns. I don't want anyone taking my guns." That statement drew applause from the crowd.

The sheriff said he is a "big believer in volunteers." He said there are some working on cold cases.

He also praised the addition of a DNA screening lab, where results can be obtained in eight to 12 days.

The turnaround at other labs and agencies would be a lot longer.

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Saturday, Feb. 23

African Violet Club meeting

Please join us for our Feb. 23 meeting at 10:30 a.m. at the Marion County Sheriff's Office (Brian Litz Sheriff's Substation), 9048 S.W. State Road 200, Ocala. We meet the fourth Saturday of every month except December. We have an exciting program planned for you this month. Our courtesy store is open during our meetings for your convenience to purchase all kinds of supplies such as new pots, soil, tools and fertilizer. We would love for you to join us while we learn new and interesting information about our beloved African violets. Delicious light refreshments are served. Check out the club website at <http://www.africanvioletclubofocala.org/>. Guests are always welcome!

Ocala Symphony; Two days of young talent

The Ocala Symphony Orchestra will showcase the two winners of the annual 22nd Young Artist Competition at the Saturday, Feb. 23 and Sunday, Feb. 24 concerts at the Ocala Breeders' Sales Auditorium, while performing some of the most uplifting and powerful pieces of the symphonic repertoire of Italian composer, Ottorino Respighi's Pines of Rome.

Julia Hossain, 14, who won the junior division, will perform Edouard Lalo's Symphonie Espagnol. Ivana Muncan, 23, who won the senior division, will perform Ludwig Van Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4. Both winners received a \$1,000 cash prize, as well as the opportunity to perform with the OSO Feb. 23 and Feb. 24.

Each year the OSO sponsors this youth outreach program for outstanding young musicians, with the goal of motivating and enhancing the music careers of promising young musicians. The competition takes it a step further by assisting these ambitious musicians in their musical careers by providing the opportunity to be a participant musician with the OSO. Maestro Matthew Wardell, OSO musicians and local area musical experts judged these promising young artists.

There will be two concerts held at OBS: Saturday, Feb. 23 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 24 at 3 p.m. Tickets start at \$5 and can be purchased by visiting www.ocalasympphony.com or calling 352-351-1606.

Sunday, Feb. 24

Creation seminar at Fellowship

Come to Fellowship Baptist Church this Sunday, Feb. 24 at either 8:30 or 11 a.m. as we welcome guest speaker Steve Levinson, renowned creation specialist. "Dr. Livingston" will explore the topics of creation and evolution, and demonstrate the message from creation to the Cross using videos, games and his fossil collection.

For more information, call Fellowship Baptist Church at 352-629-5379. We are located 7.5 miles west of I-75 at 10500 N. U.S. Highway 27, Ocala (at the junction of 464B, across from the BP station).

tion of 464B, across from the BP station).

Tuesday, Feb. 26

Black Ocala: An oral history

The Marion County League of Women Voters in cooperation with the Senior Services Programs and African American Student Union at the College of Central Florida offers a unique opportunity to learn of the rich history and heritage of Ocala's Black Community. Topics include: Paradise Park, the Cultural heritage and Black Business Community of West Ocala (including 1st Black Millionaire) and the civil and voting rights movement. This event should provide the opportunity to meet some of the individuals who have been a part of the rich legacy that is Black Ocala. It will take place at Webber Center at the College of Central Florida at 7 p.m.

SOS meeting

The SOS (Sisterhood of Survivors) Support Group meets the last Tuesday of each month at Ocala West United Methodist Church, 9330 S.W. 105th St. Room 235 (Multipurpose Room) at 1 p.m.

Our meeting on Feb. 26 will be a presentation by Jane Houldsworth, Community Relations person for America's Choice in Homecare, Visiting Angels.

We never know when we might have a need for these kinds of services and this presentation should be very interesting. If you have any questions, please contact Gail Tirpak at 352-291-6904.

Friday, March 1

World Day of Prayer

Church Women United's World Day of Prayer will be held on Friday, March 1, at First Congregational United Church of Christ, 7171 State Road 200 in the Blair Stewart Enrichment Center. Refreshments will be served beginning at 9:30 a.m. The program will start at 10 with a theme of "I Was A Stranger, and You Welcomed Me." This event is open to the public and all are welcomed. Although not required, donations for the Domestic Violence Sexual Abuse Center will be accepted. For information, call Judy, 352-629-3434.

Thursday, March 7

Mountain Mission School concert

Forty-five teenagers from Grundy, Virginia, make up this traveling concert choir that has appeared nationally and internationally in settings such as the USA - Christian Conventions, churches, Disney World, Opryland, Wolf Trap Park, the lighting of our national "Capitol Holiday Tree" - plus Canada, England, Austria and France.

Admission is free; a love offering will be taken. The event is March 7, 6 p.m. at Christ's Church of Marion County, 6768 S.W. 80th St. (off State Road 200), Ocala, 352-861-6182, www.ecomc.org/.

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

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Opinion

Our Message

Choose your heroes wisely

We've heard this message before, and now it comes into focus again: Choose your heroes wisely.

Two stories in the news in the past week emphasize this more than ever.

Last year in the Olympics, Oscar Pistorius was hailed as a hero, as he sprinted along with two artificial legs, the first with his handicap to run in the International games. He earned the nickname "Blade Runner" and people all over honored him.

Today, he sits in a South African jail, charged with killing his model girlfriend, which he first claimed was an accident.

His fall from grace has shocked many around the world, and made many realize that there was more to this man than his ability to compete.

Then came word that singer Mindy McCready, who has a history of problems, shot and killed herself over the weekend.

Although a popular singer, she was connected to all sorts of problems, going all the way back to when she was linked to then-baseball great Roger Clemens.

Despite her past, tributes have been pouring in, much as they did for the talented but troubled Whitney Houston last year.

Yet we failed to see a lot of grief expressed when major, decent figures recently died. Included in that list would be people like Patty Andrews of the Andrews Sisters, Patti Page, the singer, and Abigail Van Buren, who gave advice that was read by millions over the years.

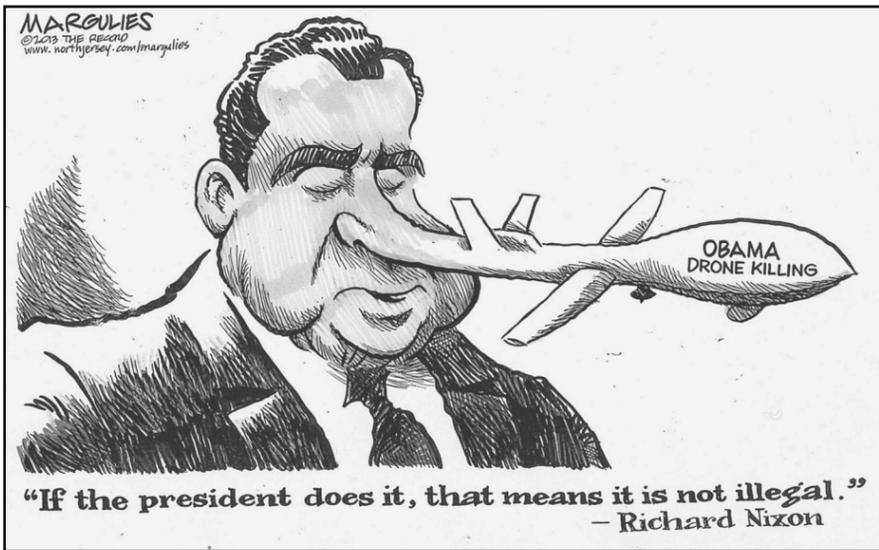
So we send this message to people, particularly the young, to try to emulate the good people, not those who get themselves in trouble with things such as drugs. A lot of these stars end up the way some of them did in the past months. That's not what good people should want.

Editorial

If you receive the West Marion Messenger, and your development is not represented by a columnist, please consider supplying information to us. For information, e-mail editor@westmarionmessenger.com

West Marion Messenger

PUBLISHER:
GERRY MULLIGAN
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JOHN PROVOST
EDITOR:
JIM CLARK



Your letters

The Force of Four

Nearly everyone is talking about: effective gun-control; the purpose of the 2nd Amendment; restrictions on assault weapons. But all this talk hasn't resulted in a common answer to the question: "How can we lessen events like the Sandy Hook massacre from happening again?"

Recent studies estimate the population of the U.S. at about 315 million. The number of guns in the U.S. is about 350 million. That's more than one gun for every man, woman, and child in the U.S. Let's be realistic, guns are a part of our lives. You can't legislate or wish guns away. They have always existed ... and they always will.

If a "crazy" wants a gun to wreak his insane havoc, he'll have little problem getting one. He can steal it, purchase it from a foreign country, another criminal, whatever. Stronger gun control laws will make it more difficult for the "crazy" to get the gun, but certainly not impossible. Gun control legislation didn't have too much effect in the past ... and it won't have too much effect as proposed.

How about arming teachers and/or school personnel? This is a good interim solution, but I suspect that we're still not addressing and resolving the real problems:

Many of our kids are cooped up in their homes. They spend hours each day playing violent video games, watching TV shows and movies they shouldn't be watching, dancing to and watching suggestive music videos. They do and text irreverent, questionable things on smart phones and computers. This is certainly not a good environment for a young, impressionable child to grow up in.

Four units, made up of the government, our schools, our houses of worship, and most importantly the kid's parents, need to meld together as a single-unit - the "Force of Four," and find new, innovative ways to get kids out of the house, away from computers, and involved in meaningful, entertaining activities.

This administration keeps talking about investing in improved education. This is the perfect time to stop talking and start doing.

Essentially, the Force of Four would provide a four-legged stool for the child. If one of the legs is temporarily missing - for example, a mother can't always find sufficient time to devote to her kids because she is a single-parent holding down two jobs - the other three legs will always be available to the child.

Two bonuses of such an initiative are that kids will develop the social skills they need to deal with the obstacles that life throws at them - they certainly won't learn any social skills by staring at a smart phone or a computer - and, perhaps events like Sandy Hook won't happen as frequently.

How much will all this cost, you're asking? Actually most of the pieces are already in place. They just need to be consolidated under a Force-of-Four umbrella. At any rate, the payoff would be worth more than any potential, additional costs.

Our children are our pathfinders to a brighter tomorrow. Unfortunately, many kids are becoming listless, self-centered and disrespectful.

These children demand our undivided attention. Maybe an initiative like the Force of Four?

We certainly don't want to become a nation of sheep ... instead, a nation that rewards individualism, achievement and entrepreneurship.

**Joe O'Hara
Ocala**

Keep the culture in our public schools

Way back in the dark ages, I was taking a freshman history class at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, New Jersey, taught by a woman whose real name escapes me at the moment.

I say real name because she taught history through the use of art, which wasn't exactly what I expected in a history course. Older students told us she had the nickname "culture vulture." High school and college kids can come up with some great names.

Knowing that about my background, you might suspect that art and music, among other cultural items, aren't exactly my thing. You would, however, be partially wrong.

I have three sons, each born four years apart, who each played in the high school band. That means that I was a band parent for 12 years straight, which might be some sort of record.

So when my wife and I descended upon West Port High School last Thursday to listen to eight high school jazz bands, it was just an extension of what we went through as parents.

We weren't disappointed. The eight bands that played, including four from West Port and one each from Belleview, Forest, Lake Weir and Vanguard high schools, showed great talent, even if not all the songs were familiar to all the attendees.

All eight of these bands were scheduled to be judged this week at a district competition at Lake Sumter College. Last week was just a warmup, with bands scheduled to get helpful critiques, but not grades, from a couple of judges.

The four bands from West Port were labeled IV, III, II and I, and all were good in their own way. West Port II was particularly entertaining, the only one to include a vocal (by Kyle Humphrey), an electric guitar by Matthew Weisberg and electric bass by Humphrey.

Possibly the hardest working, most



Among Friends

Jim Clark

visible performer was Kylie Chapman, who played the piano for seven out of the eight West Port songs. "She does not usually cover that music, but we had a piano player out sick ... so she filled in," said director Scotty Vance.

There were other soloists for the West Port performers listed on the program, including Kameron Olsen (tenor sax), Abby Ford (trumpet), Ivan Lopez (alto sax), Ava Sambriski (bass), Victoria Curtis, Joseph Borreca (alto sax), Evan Blankenship (alto sax), and Sarah Schore (tenor sax).

There are a couple of thoughts to be drawn from these performances.

First, if you ever get a chance to attend something at the West Port auditorium, by all means do so. Those of us who went to schools with "gymnasiums" and other uncomfortable chair auditoriums never even envisioned a facility such as this.

Second, there are some people who, for cost-cutting purposes, want to get rid of music in the schools. All you had to see was the talent on display last Thursday to let you disagree with that decision. We should make a concerted (pun intended) effort to keep the melodies flowing in our schools. And we should fight any attempt to play down the influence of culture upon the education of young people, so that when they get to the next level of education and encounter a "culture vulture," they'll have an easier time in class.

Jim Clark is the editor of the West Marion Messenger.

Reader Opinions Invited

- ~ The opinions expressed in West Marion Messenger editorials are the opinions of the editorial board of the newspaper.
- ~ Viewpoints depicted in political cartoons, columns or letters do not necessarily represent the opinion of the editorial board.
- ~ Groups or individuals are invited to express their opinions in letters to the editor and guest columns.
- ~ Persons wishing to contact the editor should call 352-854-3986.
- ~ All letters must be signed and include a phone number and community name, including letters sent via e-mail. Names and communities will be printed; phone numbers will not be published or given out.
- ~ We reserve the right to edit letters for length, libel, fairness and good taste. Not all contributions are printed.
- ~ Letters longer than 350 words may be regarded as columns and printed on a space-available basis, and writers will be limited to one contribution per month. The deadline is one week prior to each Wednesday's issue.
- ~ Send letters to: The West Marion Messenger Editor; 8810 S.W. State Road 200, suite 103, Ocala, FL 34481; or e-mail editor@westmarionmessenger.com.

True love trumps a romantic fling every time

February is the month we celebrate romance. Actually, the only romantic things about me are my "love handles," which is why I have spent so much energy developing them over the years. You think somebody would appreciate them.

For some people, romance is an easy, if not natural thing. Others, like me, find it complicated and elusive. It is not that men are less romantic than women are; they just have different ideas of romance.

For most women, romance is flowers and candy in heart shaped boxes.

For men it is a Big Mac with fries and a soda ... and Super Size it, please.

Why are women so complicated and men so simple? I do not think that came out the way I meant it.

If it were not for women, romance would have died a long time ago. There is nothing quite like springtime with a hint of romance in the air with a delicate dash of chivalry.

People from Hollywood try to define romance for us, but their idea of romance is raw sex and lurid lust. Hollywooders would not know romance if it nibbled on their ears. Romance is not a fling in the spring, but a lifelong relationship, experiencing all the ups and downs of life — together — and no growing apart!

There is no picture quite as refreshing as a couple still together after all those years of turmoil and temerity. The easiest thing in all the world is to fall in love for a few years and then, when it gets difficult, bale out. What kind of thing is that?

Ah, but to see a couple married for 50 years or more; now that is the epitome of real romance.

I'll have you know that romance has



Out to Pastor

Dr. James Snyder

not been a stranger at the parsonage. I met my wife (actually, she wasn't my wife then) when I went away to Bible college in 1970.

At the time, I was functionally romance challenged. Before I left home for college, I prayed for a wife. I had the good sense to know that a minister needs a good wife to support him in the ministry.

I prayed something like this, "Father, I need a good wife and I don't know how to go about it. Let the first single girl I meet at Bible college be the wife of Your choosing."

Now, I know this is a crazy and dangerous prayer to make. Some would take the high road of romance, but I took the low road of prayer. I may have been a bit desperate, but nobody could doubt my earnestness. I also figured that prayer was a lot cheaper than dating. After all, I am a Pennsylvania Dutchman.

Nevertheless, I prayed for a wife.

The day of my arrival on campus came and found me a bit anxious. I remembered my prayer and wondered just how God would answer it.

My parents took me to the college, which was some 500 miles from home; good planning on my part the men's dorm, I figured I was safe. I planned to avoid all contact with the opposite sex as long as possible.

But just as we pulled into the men's dorm parking lot, a young woman exited from the men's dorm. Remembering my prayer, I immediately amended it. "God, this doesn't count. I've not stepped out of the car yet."

Have you ever noticed that God has a marvelous sense of humor?

The young woman emerging from the men's dorm defied description. Do you remember when women rolled their hair up in big rollers? Well, this young woman had rolled her hair up in tomato cans! Nothing prepared me for such a sight. She actually looked like some space alien.

I do not know what she was wearing or even what she looked like. All I could see were those tomato cans on her head. At the time, I did not know much about romance, but I knew this was not it.

The next few days I did everything to avoid the women's dorm for fear I would run into her. Whenever I did see her, I crossed to the other side of the street. But the more I tried to avoid her, the more I ran into her. Prayer makes strange partners.

Thinking I was making progress in my plan of avoidance, the inevitable happened.

One week after arrival, my roommate invited me to come along with him and his girlfriend to a restaurant. Being the neurotic naive that I am, I said, "Sure, I'd love to come along." After all, I had nothing else to do and it seemed like some fun.

When my roommate went to the women's dorm to pick up his girlfriend, who do you suppose was standing with his girlfriend waiting?

That's right. The young woman with the tin cans on her head.

Would you believe it? The young woman with the tin cans turned out to be the sister of my roommate.

It was a whirlwind romance. I met her in September and in February she asked me to marry her. In August of that year, I found myself at a church altar mumbling, "do."

The Bible makes this promise: "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD" (Proverbs 18:22 KJV).

A good wife is the find of a lifetime, as long as God is in charge of the search.

Rev. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, PO Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with his wife, Martha, in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 1-866-552-2543 or e-mail jameessnyder2@att.net. His web site is www.jameessnyderministries.com.

Charity pro-am at Ocala Open

A charity pro-am event kicks off the Ocala Open on Tuesday, March 12, at Candler Hills Golf Club. Proceeds from the event benefit Hospice of Marion County and Interfaith Emergency Services.

Start the day with breakfast, then select a tee gift at the Nike tent. Participants will warm-up next to pros who will be vying for Ocala Open honors; play golf with a pro and get a few pointers on your own game. The day concludes with the Champion's Roundup Barbecue and Awards Luncheon.

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QUAIL

continued from Page 4

most correct answers – her prize was a bottle of Louisiana hot sauce! The 50/50 drawing was won by Jan Johnson and many other prizes were won by others. The music for the evening was provided by John Stone – he has a humongous collection of CDs.

The social committee is working very hard to have events that will appeal to you, our residents, in hopes of encouraging more to participate. The next planned social is always popular affair—it's time for the races! Mark your calendars now for March 16. Along with the races we will have a bake sale. The proceeds from the sale will help defray the costs for outside entertainment at future functions. Please let Marion or any member of the social committee know if you would like to donate some baked goodies for the sale.

Tickets are required for this event. They are available from Lil Carie and Charlotte Paye. Tickets must be purchased (\$7 donation) by March 11. Sandwiches, chips, soft drinks, etc. will be provided.

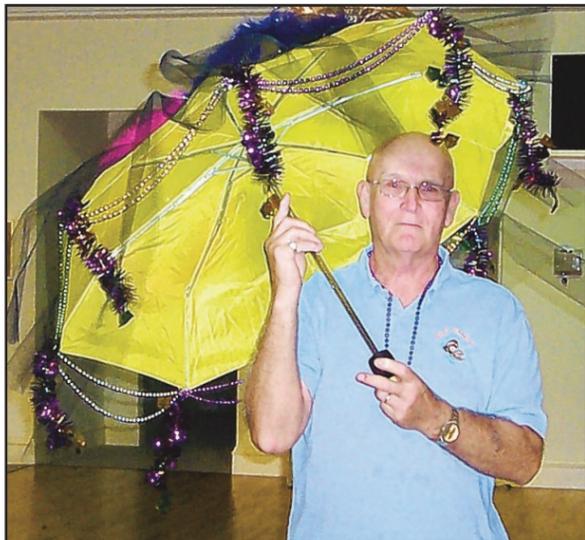
The February Ladies of Quail Meadow luncheon was held at Mimi's Cafe. There were 22 women in attendance. The food was very good, and many of us left carrying a sack of leftovers. The March luncheon will be at the Olive Garden Restaurant on March 8.



Marion Gartman, Carol Mowrey, Maryanne Ellner, Pat Tobin.



Mask Contest contestants: Pat Tobin, Carol Sjogren, Maryanne Ellner, Teresa Bachand, Lil Carie, Margene Sheidler, Jack Sheidler, Dot Roberts.



Dan Parker with his umbrella.



King and Queen - Lil Carie and Steve Kane.



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At left, Jack and Margene Sheidler with Eskimo masks. At right, Carol Sjogren and King cake.



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